CLAIMS

1. An image correction device for use in an image forming system which is connectable to a plurality of image readers and a plurality of image forming apparatuses, the image correction device comprising:

a discriminating device for discriminating an image reader and an image forming apparatus which are connected to the image correction device;

memory for storing correction data relating to combinations of the image reader and image forming apparatus; and

data correction means for correcting image data output from an image reader using the correction data relating to a specific combination of image reader and image forming apparatus and for outputting the corrected data to an image forming apparatus.

2. The image correction device of claim 1, wherein the plurality of image forming apparatuses are connected to a single image reader.

3. The image correction device of claim 1, wherein the plurality of image readers are connected to a single image forming apparatus.

4. The image correction device of claim 1, wherein the correction data for color printing include various combinations of gradient correction data, resolution data, density correction data and color correction data.

5. The image correction device of claim 1, wherein the correction data for monochrome printing include various combinations of halftone correction data, resolution data and density correction data.

6. The image correction device of claim 1, wherein the data correction means corrects the image data from the image reader based on updated correction data stored in the memory means, and outputs the corrected data to the image forming apparatus.

7. The image correction device of claim 1, further comprising means for requesting regeneration of the correction data to update the correction data stored in the memory means when a set time interval has elapsed after the last update of the correction data.

8. The image correction device of claim 1, wherein correction data relating to a first combination of image reader and image forming apparatus having the most similar characteristics to a second combination of image reader and image forming apparatus that does not have correction data stored in the memory means are used for correcting the image data.

9. The image correction device of claim 1, further comprising means for searching for correction data relating to a first combination of image reader and image forming apparatus having the most similar characteristics to a second combination of image reader and image forming apparatus that does not have correction data stored in the memory means.

10. The image correction device of claim 1, wherein the device is a data processing device.

11. An image forming system comprising:

a single data processing device;

a plurality of image readers connected to the single data processing device; and

a plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to the single data processing device,

wherein the single data processing device handles image correction for the plurality of image readers and the plurality of image forming apparatuses.

12. An image forming system connected to a network of a plurality of image readers and a plurality of image forming apparatuses, comprising an image correction device for handling image correction for the whole network of the plurality of image readers and the plurality of image forming apparatuses.

13. The image forming system of claim 12, wherein the image correction device is a server.

14. The image forming system of claim 12, wherein the image correction device is a controller.

15. The image forming system of claim 12, wherein the image correction device is an image transmission device.

16. A storage medium for storing program software of an image correction device used in an image forming system connectable to a plurality of image readers and a plurality of image forming apparatuses, wherein the storage medium stores a storage program including correction data relating to specific combinations of the plurality of image readers and the plurality of image forming apparatuses.

17. The storage medium for storing program software of claim 16, wherein the storage medium further stores a data correction control program for correcting image data output from an image reader using the correction data relating to a specific combination of image reader and image forming apparatus and transmitting the corrected data to an image forming apparatus when image formation is executed.

18. The storage medium for storing program software of claim 17, wherein the data correction control program further includes a program for correcting the image data from the image reader based on updated correction data.

19. The storage medium for storing program software of claim 16, wherein the storage medium further stores a correction data regeneration request program for requesting the regeneration of the correction data when a set time interval has elapsed after the last update of the correction data.

20. The storage medium for storing program software of claim 16, wherein the storage medium further stores a search control program for searching for correction data relating to a first combination of image reader and image forming apparatus having the most similar characteristics to a second combination of image reader and image forming apparatus which does not have correction data stored on the storage medium.

21. An image correction method for use in an image forming system which is connectable to a plurality of image readers and a plurality of image forming apparatuses, the image correction method is used for suppressing distortion in the image forming system by using optimum image correction information corresponding to mechanical differences and changes over time in the

plurality of image readers and the plurality of image forming apparatuses, the image correction method comprising the steps of:

discriminating an image reader and an image forming apparatus which are connected to the image correction device;

storing correction data relating to combinations of the image readers and image forming apparatuses; and

correcting image data output from an image reader using the correction data relating to a specific combination of image reader and image forming apparatus and outputting the corrected data to an image forming apparatus.

22. The image correction method of claim 21, wherein the correcting step corrects the image data from the image reader based on updated correction data and outputs the corrected data to the image forming apparatus.

23. The image correction method of claim 21, further comprising the step of requesting regeneration of the correction data to update the correction data when a set time interval has elapsed after the last update of the correction data.

24. The image correction method of claim 21, wherein the correction data relating to a first combination of image reader and image forming apparatus having the most similar characteristics to a second combination of image reader and image forming apparatus that does not have correction data are used for correcting the image data.

25. The image correction method of claim 21, further comprising the step of searching for correction data relating to a first combination of image reader and image forming apparatus having the most similar characteristics to a second

combination of image reader and image forming apparatus that does not have correction-data.